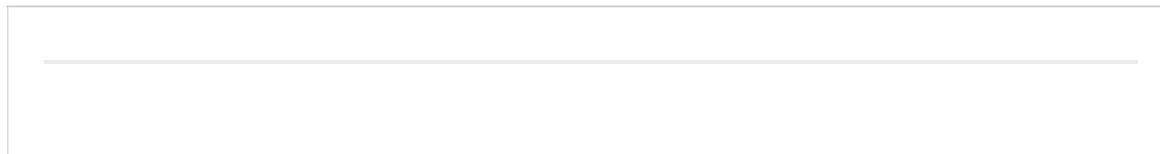


In This Issue

- VWGS COVID-19 emergency response
- Urgent news: When and how classes will resume
- Exams and events update
- Letter from the Ministry of Education
- Online resources

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VWGS COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Liebe Eltern, dear parents,

We want to provide you with a quick update regarding our school's response to the current COVID-19 emergency. Especially, we want to let you know when and how our classes will continue, give you updates with respect to exams and events, and provide online resources so your child/ren can continue their successful learning path.

As this is not a regular newsletter, we will limit ourselves to the essentials. We hope you and your families are well and stay safe.

Best wishes,

Ute Steves and the Vancouver Westside German School team

URGENT NEWS: WHEN AND HOW CLASSES WILL RESUME

We have been working hard to make sure that German school keeps rolling after spring break. We are happy to announce that we will offer our classes in an online learning format for the rest of the VWGS school year (until end of May). Online classes will start on **Tuesday, March 31st** (Junior classes) and **Wednesday, April 1st** (Senior classes) respectively.

What will our lessons look like?

We will use a combination of **Zoom videoconferencing** with the teacher and

posted online assignments (to be worked on individually without the teacher) to continue to provide our students with engaging and authentic lessons. Learning via videoconferencing will require the presence of parents during the first video session to support their children with the technical aspects. It will likely be more strenuous than in-person classes, for students and teachers alike, therefore our video conference sessions will last between appr. 30 and 60 minutes (depending on the age and level of the students). In order to match the regular class time of 2.25h, the video sessions will be complemented with additional posted assignments on a learning platform.

Video conferences will take place on the same day and during the same time frame as our regular class hours (Tuesday or Wednesday). Your teacher will be in touch with you regarding details about how and when those video conferences will take place exactly and which learning platform will be used for posted assignments. We highly recommend that students keep to a regular schedule to work on the assignments given by the teacher.

What do parents/students need to do?

Each student will need access to a computer/laptop/tablet (or a mobile phone, but this is probably less ideal). We ask parents to ensure that the students have a quiet area when they participate in video conferences and we ask that the students use headsets, if possible.

We are aware that some families have multiple children in our program on the same day and will need several devices and rooms to accommodate each child's online class. In many cases, families will be able to find creative ways to overcome those challenges.

This is uncharted territory for all of us. There will be hiccups and we will do our best to address them. Thank you for your continuing support!

EXAMS AND EVENTS UPDATES

- The German authorities have postponed all German language exams until further notice. We will let you know as soon as we receive updated information.
 - All VWGS events scheduled to take place until the end of May (e.g. open-house, year-end celebration) have been cancelled until further notice.
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LETTER FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff:

The health and safety of our students, staff and their families is our highest priority.

The global pandemic COVID-19 is moving quickly and its impact on British Columbians is growing.

We have followed the direction – daily – of public health officials and scientists in making fact-based decisions when it comes to B.C.'s school system.

Today, under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer we are directing all schools to immediately suspend in-class instruction until further notice.

While classroom lessons are suspended it is expected that schools will implement a variety of measures to ensure continued learning for students.

We are urging teachers, principals, school districts and independent school authorities to begin planning now to ensure continuity of learning and I have

tasked Ministry of Education staff to work with our education partners to coordinate these initiatives.

We expect school districts and independent schools will develop plans to maintain some level of service for children of people who are performing essential services across our province – like medical health professionals, first responders, pharmacists and critical infrastructure workers.

We also know there are vulnerable students who have unique needs; important services like school meal programs, and child care services operating on school grounds that need to be addressed. We expect schools to consider these issues in their planning while we work together through these extraordinary times.

Every student will receive a final mark, and all students on track to move to the next grade will do so in the fall. For grades 10 and 11 students, graduation assessments will be postponed.

Every student eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate. The only graduation assessment required for current Grade 12 students is the Grade 10 numeracy assessment. The Ministry of Education will ensure Grade 12 students who have not yet completed this assessment and who are otherwise on track to graduate are able to meet this graduation requirement.

The ministry will also work with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and with post-secondary institutions on admissions and the smooth transition of graduating students in this extra-ordinary year.

We will continue to work in consultation with our education partners as we plan for ongoing learning, including frequent contact with school districts to ensure we work through this together as plans are developed.

This is a very challenging time in B.C. and around the world. Please take necessary preventative measures to keep you and your families healthy. If you think you have symptoms the Ministry of Health has developed an online self-assessment tool at covid19.thrive.health. If you do have symptoms you can call 8-1-1 to pre-arrange health testing. While symptomatic, self-isolate.

The province has launched a new non-medical information line for British Columbians who have questions about COVID-19: 1-888-COVID19. Phone lines are open 7 days a week from 7:30 AM to 8 PM, and information is available in more than 110 languages.

These measures are temporary. But we must act together and act now to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,
Rob Fleming
Minister
(letter issued on March 17, 2020)

ONLINE RESOURCES

Here is a selection of useful links:

Onilo - Animated children's books with competence-oriented teaching material (free 1-month trial)

ARD Kinderprogramm - TV, books, radio and more for children age 3 and older

ARD Kinderfilme & -dokus - movies and documentaries for children

ZDF tivi - the German TV station's broadcast for children

Deutsche Welle - learn German with Deutsche Welle (different levels offered)

Step into German - a great variety of videos, music, podcasts, and worksheets (Goethe-Institut)

Averting psychological consequences of Corona - 3-minute video for

children aged 6-12

Pixi Wissen TV - videos to gain knowledge in different areas

Eduthek - school supplies for different ages

Diercke - The famous world atlas for free (2 months access)

Duden Learnattack - free 2 month trial for Duden's learning portal for students from 4th grade to high school

4Kids Learning Videos - videos for young children to learn the alphabet, numbers, astronomy, flags or professions

Lesestart zum Lesenlernen - Visit the library with the reading kangaroo and immerse yourself in five exciting books

GEolino Podcast - "Together against Corona" provides an overview of the topic along with further information

Kids at home 2020 - Audio and children's songs, videos, handicraft, and live concerts to combat boredom

Youtube Germany #westayathome - a temporary platform with information and resources during the corona pandemic

Amazon Germany - free children's videos, currently due to Corona no Prime membership necessary

KiKaNinchen - App with which children can immerse themselves in the lovingly crafted world of snippets

BR Kinder - bedtime stories and news for children

Schlaudino - worksheets for printout, level A1 and up

Coloring pages - many different designs, calendars, quizzes

lernox - a great collection of DaF and Daz materials, different levels

Einfach vorlesen - stories to read aloud

Learn German with **worksheets** or **a German music blog**

Visit the zoo from home - watch elephants, koalas, panda, penguins and more live on your screen. Simply click on "Videos and cams".

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